

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4, and 7-11 are pending in this application. Claims 4 and 7 are withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, Claims 1, 2 and 4 are amended; Claims 3 and 5-6 are canceled; and Claims 8-11 are added herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by JP 08-148295 to Hirose; Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hirose in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,660,673 to Miyoshi; and Claims 5-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hirose in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,000,360 to Koshimizu.

With respect to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103, those rejections are respectfully traversed. In particular, the applied art does not teach or suggest a dike that confines the plasma gas generated by said plasma generation unit in an area above said process target mounted on said mounting table, the dike, which serves as an opposite electrode for generating plasma gas, includes a conductive member formed of a conductor and a protruding portion formed to surround the support table and the mounting table and to be higher than a mounting surface of said mounting table, the conductive member is grounded, and the protruding portion of said dike is formed to be higher than said process target mounted on said mounting table, so as to surround the area above said process target, and the plasma processing apparatus further includes a lifting unit that lifts up or down said dike, as recited in Claim 1.

In contrast, Hirose discusses a plasma leakage preventing body 51, however, the leakage preventing body 51 is not formed to surround an area above a process target.

Further, the leakage body 51 includes bores 52, or gas flow openings. Additionally, there is a gap between the plasma leakage preventing body 51 and susceptor 5. As such, plasma of process gas is not prevented from spreading. Since the plasma leakage preventing body 51 according to Hirose does not allow plasma gas to concentrate in the area above the process target, a process using plasma gas cannot be efficiently performed.

Miyoshi discusses a ring 8 made of quartz. The ring 8 does not contain a conductive member, which therefore allows plasma to spread outside the dike. Since the ring according to Miyoshi does not allow plasma gas to concentrate in an area above a process target, a process using plasma gas cannot be efficiently performed.

According to one or more examples of the present invention, a dike includes a conductive member formed of a conductor and a protruding portion formed to be higher than a process target mounted on a mounting table, so as to surround an area above the process target. These features can prevent plasma from spreading outside the dike. As a result, plasma gas is concentrated in the area above the process area, and a process using plasma gas can be performed efficiently.

Koshimizu discusses a baffle plate which does not comprise a protruding portion formed to be higher than a mounting surface of a mounting table, so as to surround the mounting table and a support table. The baffle plate according to Koshimizu does not correspond to the dike according to the claimed invention.

In one or more examples of the present invention, a lifting unit is provided to lift up or down the dike and the mounting table in a process chamber and can control the time (e.g., increase the time) for the process gas to stay in a process area. None of the applied art teaches or suggests the features of a lifting unit that lifts up or down a dike and a mounting table in a process chamber, the dike including a protruding portion formed to be higher than a

process target mounted on the mounting table, so as to surround an area above the process target, and a dike which serves as an opposite electrode, as claimed.

New Claim 11 is allowable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1. New Claims 8-10 recite features disclosed at least in paragraph [0028] of the present specification and are not taught by the applied art.

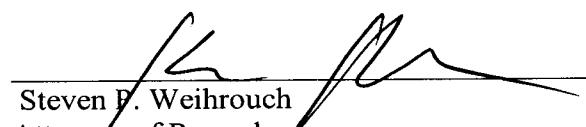
Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103 is respectfully requested.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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